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SUN

MORNING 191,090

EVENING 214,254

SUNDAY 318,537

MAR 10 1963

ILLEGIB

Hard Necessity

Spokesmen for both parties and both ends of Pennsylvania avenue are hastening to agree with Representative Mahon of Texas, who says there is a lot too much loose talk about intelligence operations. Mr. Mahon's incontrovertible view is that a person whose job is cloak-and-dagger should keep his cloak around him at all times and his dagger carefully concealed. "A passion for anonymity is an integral part of their jobs," is how he puts it.

One would never guess it from the activities of the past two years, during which the Central Intelligence Agency has pranced openly around the Caribbean and the halls of Washington while insisting that it is hush-hush, and while the Administration and Congress have together gone far further than any newspaper man would dare in discussing American intelligence work.

The truth is that to all normal Americans, in and out of politics, it is an obnoxious thing that we should maintain a huge network of spies and secret agents. It is even more unpleasant when intelligence people are not accountable to our representatives for their actions, their spending, their policies, in the normal way. So, perhaps, we try to take the undemocratic curse off the whole unsavory business by blabbing and bringing it as far as possible into the open.

Unfortunately this is not the way intelligence works. If it is to be any good it must be secret. It must not reply to unfair accusations or take credit for successful operations. It must work in the shadows and in silence, and the less it is talked about in responsible quarters, the better.